

[illegible]

AN (human) cells. These are professional antigen-presenting cells with the unique capacity to induce primary antibody responses. In the past few years, there has been a growing interest in the use of these cells as **exosomes**, which are secreted by the cells. Major histocompatibility complex class II and class I and T cell co-stimulatory molecules, and/or glycoproteins are loaded into **exosomes** prior to secretion. These **exosomes** are then taken up by target cells and induce an immune response. **Exosome-based vaccines** represent an alternative to the current technology of subunit vaccines that is without

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TITLE:

B lymphocytes secrete antigen-presenting vesicles.

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ABSTRACT:

Antigen-presenting cells contain a specialized late endocytic compartment, MIIC (major histocompatibility complex [MHC] class II-enriched compartment), that harbors newly synthesized MHC class II molecules in transit to the plasma membrane. MIICs have a limiting membrane enclosing characteristic internal membrane vesicles. Both the limiting membrane and the internal vesicles contain MHC class II. In this study on B lymphoblastoid cells, we demonstrate by immunoelectron microscopy that the limiting membrane of MIICs can fuse directly with the plasma membrane, resulting in release from the cells of internal MHC class II-containing vesicles. These secreted vesicles, named exosomes, were isolated from the cell culture media by differential centrifugation followed by flotation on sucrose density gradients. The overall surface protein composition of exosomes differed significantly from that of the plasma membrane. Exosome-bound MHC class II was in a compact, peptide-bound conformation. Metabolically labeled MHC class II was released into the extracellular medium with relatively slow kinetics, 10 +/- 4% in 24 h, indicating that direct fusion of MIICs with the plasma membrane is not the major pathway by which MHC class II reaches the plasma membrane. Exosomes derived from both human and murine B lymphocytes induced antigen-specific MHC class II-restricted T cell responses. These data suggest a role for exosomes in antigen presentation in vivo.